

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries

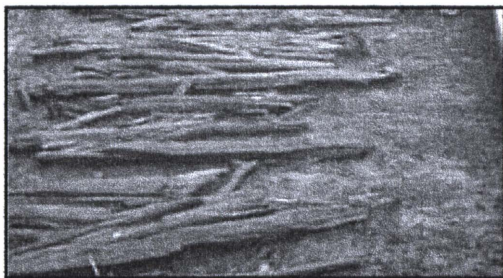


No. 103

October 2013

THE ABBOT'S WAY AND SWEET TRACK LEYS

In August and September I assisted at an archaeological dig at Burtle on the Somerset Levels, organised by Somerset Heritage. Burtle was originally a sand island in the marsh, west of the rock island of Westhay, and a Neolithic wooden plank trackway was discovered near there during the 1830s or 1840s and another exposure was viewed during an excursion of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society in 1864. It was excavated in 1873 and called the Abbot's Way as it was theorised at the time that it was created to link Glastonbury Abbey to Burtle Priory, but was later found to be Neolithic, approximately 2000 BC. It runs eastwards from Burtle to Westhay, and another was found in 1970 going from Westhay to the Polden Ridge to the south. This is the Sweet Track, found during peat excavations, and is named after its finder, Ray Sweet.



The Abbot's Way



Burtle Farm. The entrance drive aligns with Robins Lane and the Abbot's Way

There are leys running along each of these tracks; the Abbots Way ley goes through West Huntspill Church and the crossroads there, a crossroads at Cote, then it goes through the farmhouse at Burtle Farm (the dig was adjacent to this) and is coincident with Robins Lane, Burtle and the first stretch of the Meare Road beyond, passing through Burtle Church between them. It then runs across the moor following the Abbots Way to Westhay, then goes through Meare, apparently missing the church (though going through the Abbot's Fish House), but it may touch it as it was found to be quite a wide ley, 40 paces wide like the G-line to Glastonbury. This was measured at Burtle and where it runs near the West

Mendip Hospital north of Glastonbury. I did experiments with the sandjar ley detector at Meare Church in 1976, and my wife Doris confirmed the reaction - there also seemed to be strong headhum there, indicating a powerful place. The ley seems to go through the site of the Iron Age lake village at Meare - it just misses the small square on the map indicating the village, but the site was considerably bigger than this. It goes on from Meare to pass through the site of the Glastonbury lake village, then runs north of Glastonbury to a cross-roads/tracks east of West Pennard.



The Sweet Track ley goes through a cross-roads/tracks and boundary east of Burrow Mump and then crosses the St. Michael Line at an unmarked centre, goes through Swayne's Jumps on the Polden Ridge and a cross-roads near Shapwick, then follows the line of the Sweet Track to Westhay. It then continues through Draycott to a tumulus on the Mendips and Charterhouse Church, then a cross-roads at Hounsley Batch and a small church in Bristol.

The dig at Burtle was not instigated because of Neolithic connection, however, but because it was the site of a medieval hermitage and later priory, and burials had been found by the farmer who owned the land, but the site of the buildings was not known. A number of hermits had occupied these islands in the Moors, and one had come to Burtle (or "Sprawlesmede" as it then was - "burtle" is a generic name for the islands and this one has taken it as its own name) in the twelfth century and dug a boundary ditch round the area, which Richard Brunning, director of the dig, detected with geophysics. The farmhouse is within this, but the present church is not, so this cannot be the site of the priory buildings. There is a legend of a tunnel between the farmhouse and Westhay; this is not really possible because of the waterlogged nature of the land, but could indicate a memory of the track as has been noted elsewhere. There was also said to have been a crypt found below the farmhouse, which suggests it may be the site of the priory church, although it is not certain. In the adjoining field, the geophysics showed other possible ditches, but did not seem to indicate buildings.

A successor to the original hermit, Walter the Hermit, was later given the land and a living by the landowner in return for praying for his soul, and it became a priory under the authority of Glastonbury Abbey after later bequests of land were added, but it was a small affair and



Burtle Church (19th century). On the Abbot's Way ley, but not within the priory boundary ditch



The possible bell clapper

never had more than a few canons. It was closed, as with all religious houses, at the Dissolution of the Monasteries and apparently completely demolished. In later times the farmhouse was the only building on the area, which seems to suggest it was built on the foundations of the priory buildings. It, and the present church, are both on the Abbot's Way ley, suggesting subconscious siting both by the original hermit and the builders of the present church.

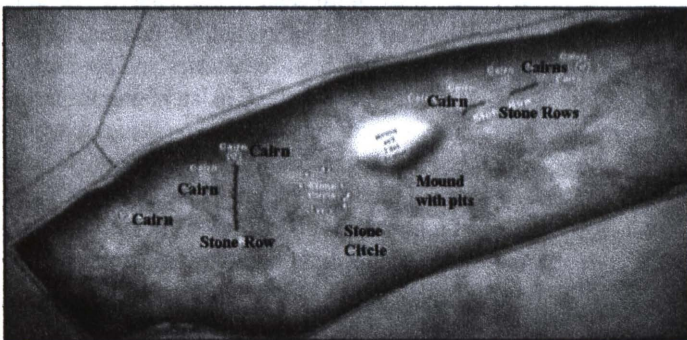
The trenches (the largest of which was crossed by the ley) as was probably expected, did not reveal any walls or foundations, but the site was dated as medieval by the scatter of pottery shards found throughout the site, and a number of ditches were indicated by staining of the soil. Also, early in the excavation a large number of apparently high status medieval roof tiles were found, with holes for the fixing nails, as if the site was a demolition dump. A cauldron was found on the first day, and later at least one burial, so it could have encroached on part of the cemetery of the priory, but there were not enough bodies to suggest it was all part of it. I found a strange object with a spherical end and a small nipple-like appendage that I felt could have been a bell clapper from the priory. There was no hole in the other end (for hanging from the bell), but this end did appear to be broken. An image of a bell clapper sought on Google did look similar.

LEYS AT VERY ANCIENT DARTMOOR SITE

In 2011 Time Team recorded their 200th programme at Tottiford Reservoir on the edge of Dartmoor. It could be said to be their most significant dig, as the place seemed to have been perceived as sacred from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age - which could make it as much as eight thousand years old - and there are leys associated with it, so this shows the system to be much older than the Neolithic. The site also has an example of an alignment approaching a stone circle tangentially, as seemed to be the case with the Negen Stones site at Staines, Middlesex. The name Tottiford contains one of the significant place-name elements described by Alfred Watkins - Tot and Dod he felt referred to the ancient surveyor "tottering" or "doddering" backwards and forwards with his staves.

When the water level in the reservoir had been low the previous year someone noticed stones protruding from it and contacted Jane Marchand, of Dartmoor National Park Authority, thinking they may be ancient. So it was drained to enable Time Team to dig the site.

In this narrow piece of land between two linear hills, pointing roughly north-east to south-west, there was a large central and rather elongated mound, what appeared to be a stone circle and two stone rows, one single and the other double. Along one edge there were several



single stone row, however, was found to be Bronze Age, but the large mound in the centre had many flint implements and flakes that dated it to the Mesolithic period. It also had a row of pits in alignment with the double stone row - very significant as this was found to be Bronze Age, showing the site was in use and probably perceived as sacred in both periods. Mesolithic structure sites are rare; I have visited one that was preserved at Albury in Surrey,



Geophysics showing stone holes

but this was a dwelling, not a sacred site. Stonehenge may be another example, as the post holes discovered in the car park there were Mesolithic, but the alignment at Tottiford makes it more certainly continuation at the same site.



The wedging stone

The stone circle, at first doubted to be one, was found to be so when geophysics revealed several other stone holes. One was excavated and found to be for a stone and not a post because of an internal ramp. Also an existing stone was found to have a small wedging stone to hold it at the right angle. Bronze Age pottery fragments were found on the circle site, but there was also a Mesolithic post hole in the centre and more Mesolithic flints showing that a timber structure was here then. Francis Pryor, one of the archaeologists, said the place had a feeling of a sacred site.

The ley which runs along the significant Bronze Age double stone row and Mesolithic pit alignment comes in a north-westerly direction through Hennington Church, runs along the double stone row and the Mesolithic alignment,



Stones in the double stone row

cairns.

These cairns were investigated first, and because they were on nineteenth century ground surface area they were found to date only to then, around the time the valley was flooded in 1861. The

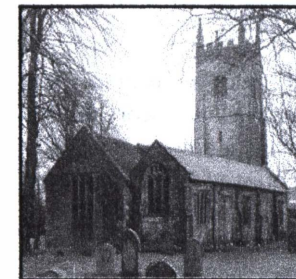
touches the stone circle tangentially, then passes through one of the summits of Prestonbury Castle Hill, (though not the fort there). It then goes through Spreyton Church, a main cross-roads at North Tawton and a trig point west of Hollocombe.



Christow Church

at Leigh in Surrey, mentioned in the Hurt Wood Track article in this issue, but there it is pronounced "Iye".

Spreyton Church, mentioned in connection with the double stone row alignment, is also connected with "Widcombe Fair" as it has the grave of a Tom Cobby, although it is not



Spreyton Church

known for certain if the character "Uncle Tom Cobby" or the ghostly grey mare actually existed. But my father had an eerie experience camping in the area many years ago, when one of the famous Dartmoor mists had come down. A white horse suddenly emerged from the mist, looked at him and disappeared once more into it.



Green Man boss at Spreyton Church

The ley then goes through a cairn north of Widcombe in the Moor, and then the junction of a track and a stone row which points at Yar Tor, then going to a cairn cist called the Crock of Gold.



The Crock of Gold cairn cist

The cairn with its kerbstones is about 4 metres in diameter, and half a metre in height. Centrally within this is a rectangular cist, about 1 metre by 0.5 metre in size. The capstone has been displaced to the west, and is still laying on top of the cairn.

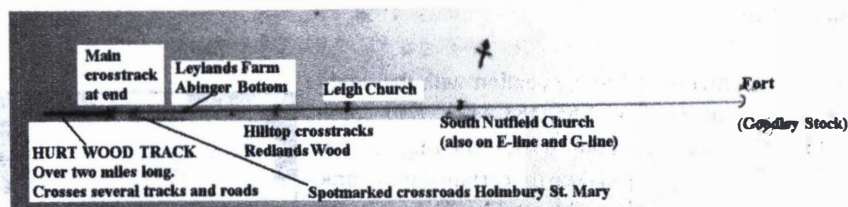
The ley running along the single stone row, which was also found to be Bronze Age and which the archaeologists felt was a boundary of the site, touches the southern part of the Great Leigh Farm building and also goes through Christow Church. It then runs along the stone row and goes to Raven Tor and the cairn at Hameldon Beacon.



The cairn at Hameldon Beacon

After this there is a clump south of Grendon Farm, a cairn cist and an alignment of hut circles east of Two Bridges. Two of the significant leys passing through Christow Church seem to indicate this is a place worthy of investigation. It stands on the west hillside of the Teign valley. To the west the hill rises well over 800 ft. to moorland where the two reservoirs of Tottiford and Kennick are.

THE HURT WOOD TRACK LEY



One often comes across short stretches of straight track or road coinciding with leys, but occasionally much longer stretches are found, tending to confirm Watkins' theory that the alignments represent routemarkings. The best of these so far found in Surrey is the Hurt Wood Track, stretching for over two miles from Winterfold Forest to Hurt Wood near Holmbury St. Mary. In addition to its coinciding ley, there are four indications that it is ancient. Firstly, it is not a modern forest track from A to B (it begins and ends "in the middle of nowhere"); secondly, it is broken by a farm in the middle, but continues in the same alignment, suggesting the track is older than the farm; thirdly, the nature of the track (narrow, wide etc.) varies along its length; fourthly, it runs up some quite steep hills and becomes quite difficult in these places.

In addition to the points marked on the sketch map, there is at least one acceptable hill-clump on the track itself, and many cross-tracks, some of which must be acceptable as half-points.

The Hurt Wood Control Committee said the track is "Roman, as far as we know", implying that they have some awareness that it is ancient. However, Roman roads required destinations and it is difficult to see where this one would lead - in addition to which there is a known Roman road running nearby in another direction.

There are several other coinciding straight tracks in Surrey, all on public footpaths. One

is Fox Hill, running between Pyrford and Old Woking. This is about a mile long, and its ley goes through Byfleet Church, a powerful church which I have used for energy experiments.



The hill on the Hurt Wood Track where Philip Heselton saw an unusual grounded object in the 1950s

Another is Ferry Lane, Chertsey, over half a mile long and aligning with Laleham Church, an interesting town footpath called Church Walk in Chertsey, Danewell Hill hillclump on Horsell Common and Worplesdon Church. Ferry Lane is actually a stretch of Roman road, meeting the Egham branch road and one going to Chobham, and is near what appears to be the site of a Roman villa, seen from an apparent cropmark on the Multimap web site. (This is very similar in shape to one found by Time Team at Tockenham in Wiltshire). A shorter example goes from Priest Hill, Ewell, then through two churches, two major cross-roads and a triangulation point on the North Downs with attendant track aligning.

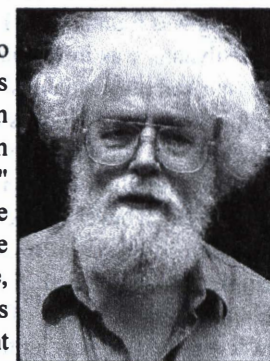
(from research done in 1984)

NOTES AND NEWS

A Very British Witchcraft

This programme on Channel 5, about the religion of Wicca (Pagan Witchcraft) and its founder Gerald Gardner, was introduced by Professor Ronald Hutton, who has been studying it for twenty years. My school friend Philip Heselton, the first editor of *The Ley Hunter*, and now a Wiccan initiate, also contributed to the programme. He has written a biography of Gerald Gardner.

The programme explained how Gardner had been attracted to occult practices and inspired by Conan Doyle, and this was cemented by contact with tribal rituals in Malaya. He then discovered English witchcraft and wanted in. There is a tradition of useful witchcraft going back to middle ages; the "cunning folk" who practised to heal the sick or bring good luck. He used these traditions in his rituals, but ambition set him apart from the cunning folk of old. He wanted to use magic on a greater scale, not just in health but in the world. He wanted to test the powers against something truly dangerous - the Nazis. He was prominent in the home guard and held a coven one night in 1940 to repel the Germans with magic. Philip and Professor Hutton visited the site of this ritual, in which a "cone of power" was raised, directed towards the German high command and Hitler. There is a mention of something similar happening in Elizabethan times



Philip Heselton

to repel the Spanish Armada, in *Men among Mankind* by Brinsley Le Poer Trench.

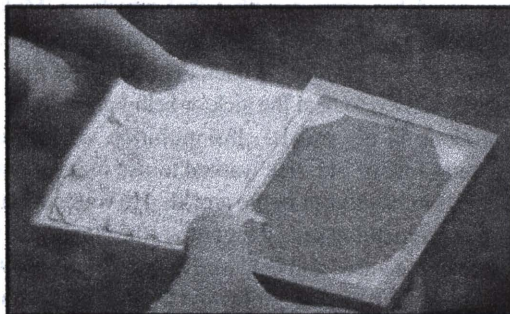
The Witchcraft Act was still in force at the time and had been used against the medium Helen Duncan in 1944 who was imprisoned after answering questions to people about relatives killed in action. So Gardner published the information in the form of a novel. But the act was repealed in 1951 with support from Churchill, and, after appearing on the Panorama programme interviewed by Richard Dimbleby, he started a movement which has grown in popularity to the present day, and was described as the only truly British religion.

Forbidden History in Sardinia.

There is currently a very interesting series on the Yesterday TV channel called *Forbidden History*, putting light on a number of things which have been "forbidden" by powerful factions, religious and scientific. In its third programme it was revealed that there are legends of "giants" in Sardinia in ancient times. It has megalithic "giants' graves" which are actually communal tombs as in Britain, but there are other graves where very large human-type remains have reportedly been found. The tradition is that these are the biblical Nephilim, the "giants in the earth in those days" which Zechariah Sitchin has linked with Sumerian texts and hypothesises were a group of extraterrestrials which interbred with the humans that existed then. What suggests there may be some truth in this is that when a very large skeleton was found, government officials apparently appeared and confiscated the remains, which have never been seen since. This type of raid is not usual in the case of archaeological finds, but only of things associated with extraterrestrials, so their action is actually evidence in favour of what they were seemingly intent on hiding.

The One Ring

On the *Inside Out West* TV programme on 23rd September was a strange story of a gold ring, Tolkien and a Roman temple in Gloucestershire. A lead tablet with a curse on the wearer of a ring was found on the Lydney Park Estate, near the River Severn. In the fourth century one Silvanus was in the bath house and left his ring with his clothes. When he returned, the ring had been stolen, so he had a curse tablet made vowing to give half its value to the temple of the god Nodens on its return, and cursing the thief to have health withheld. The tablet was then buried in the temple. But it never was returned, and in time Roman rule came to an end and the temple was abandoned. Locals came to think it was a haunt of goblins and dwarves, and it was untouched for a thousand years. In the late 1920s the talented author J.R.R. Tolkien visited this magical place, doing other academic work there. He knew that in 1785 in a field in Hampshire a ring with the name of Silvanus



The curse tablet

was found. But this was not just any old field, but the site of the Roman city of Calleva Atrebatum in Silchester. Evidently the rascally thief had travelled there. We do not know if any terrible fate befell him, but could the ring with the curse have been the inspiration for the One Ring that Ruled them All in *The Lord of the Rings*? Of course, the piece ended with the presenter putting on the ring and vanishing from sight!



The Roman site at Lydney



The Ring

My family came from Silchester and my great-grandfather was clerk and sexton of the church (grave digger) and found many Roman artefacts in the churchyard, the one place that was then out of bounds to the archaeologists. I have some of the pieces of Samian ware and greyware, but perhaps his best find was a set of Roman horse bells which are now in Reading Museum. He is buried in the site of a Roman

temple, a pair of two that are on a ley running to Silchester that I followed with TEMS many years ago. The nineteenth century excavations at Silchester are comprehensively recorded in a set of *Archaeologia* (of the Society of Antiquaries) in Wells Cathedral Library. It records another ring found there, bearing the name Abraxas, near the apparent early Christian church in the city. This name has associations with Gnostic Christianity, which suggests the church may have been of this branch of the religion in existence at that time.

The Vicars Close ley

Vicars' Close, Wells is the oldest inhabited street in England. It was built in the fourteenth century for the Vicars Choral (men of the choir) of Wells Cathedral under charter from King Edward III (the same king who built the Round Table building at Windsor Castle that was excavated by Time Team). At the end of it is the Vicars' Chapel, a rather unusual tiny church which is something like a chancel without a nave. The alignment of the street points at the ley centre in the Cathedral and at the Bishop's Chapel in the Bishop's Palace grounds.

FREESAMPLE
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Coming northwards, the ley goes through North Wootton Church, built in the 12th century. This village is one of those associated with the Worminster Sleight dragon legend and



Vicars' Close

Bishop Jocelin, and has a Dragon Barn. Next the line passes through a bastion in the palace wall on its way to the Bishop's Chapel, built between 1275 and 1292 for Bishop Robert Burnell. It then passes through the Cathedral centre (which seems to be where the pulpit is in the quire), where it meets the two diagonal leys which seem to form a St. Andrew's cross, and the west-running ley going to Beacon Hill, Shepton Mallet. The line is then coincident with Vicars Close, passing through the chapel at the end. It

then goes up into the Mendips and a tumulus at Priddy before running along the closely mean-following East Water Lane. Could this be "The Lord's Path" at Priddy, associated with the legends of Jesus visiting the village when in Britain as a teenager? The folklorist Ruth Tongue wrote of an aged visitor to her family home describing how to find "the Lord's Path" at Priddy, but as this event took place in 1901 when she was a young girl she couldn't be entirely certain as to precisely what had been said. The ley then meets another tumulus near Haydon Grange, a clump south of the village of Lye Hole, and a small church at Backwell.

LETTERS

from Norman Darwen, Lostock, Lancashire

On the sweltering August Bank Holiday Monday, I took the family up to Coniston in the Lake District. After many hours by the Lake we decided - at around 7 pm - to try to climb the mountain known as the Old Man of Coniston. We followed the well-defined track for a while, then decided it would be too late to reach the top, and where we were was extremely quiet and appealing, if a little brooding. We stayed for about 20 minutes, gradually becoming quieter and succumbing to a not unpleasant atmosphere before coming back down.

Only a few days later I was reading Peter Hough's book *Supernatural Lancashire*, which keeps to the older, pre-1974 county boundary - and looking at the book's photograph of the Old Man of Coniston, I realised where we had stopped was the same place. The photograph's caption was "The old copper mine workings on Coniston Old Man, close to where two school boys claimed to have photographed a "flying saucer".

The photograph that Stephen Darbishire took back in February 1954 is very well known, and I recall seeing it frequently in the Lancashire papers even though I was not born when it was taken. It includes nothing in it that could identify the location. Certainly the site is well worth a visit - if only for the view!

WEB SITES

The following web sites are all relevant to earth mysteries

The Buckingham Palace Ley Line <http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/royal-ley>

The Old Stones of Staines <http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/staines>

The E-line <http://www.spacevoice.fsnet.co.uk/semg/eline.htm>

Ley Structure <http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/leystruc.htm>

The Truth about the Ley System <http://www.tlh6976.fsnet.co.uk/leytruth.htm>

A Life of Ley Hunting <http://www.leyhunt.fsnet.co.uk>

The Great Isosceles Triangle of England - leys and orthoteny (UFO sighting lines): <http://www.egyouth.fsnet.co.uk/triangle>

The Solar Transition Effect <http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/soltrans.htm>

The Real Stonehenge and Avebury - Mollie Carey's photos of carvings at ancient sites: <http://www.egyouth.fsnet.co.uk>

The Ley Hunter 1969-76 - the magazine on leys, with some articles by Tony Wedd: <http://www.tlh6976.fsnet.co.uk>

Flying Saucers, Leys and Lost Technology - the Tony Wedd site: <http://www.egyouth.fsnet.co.uk/tony>

The Egham and Thorpe Virtual Roman Museum <http://www.egyouth.fsnet.co.uk/romanegham>

Jesus and Uxella - a distinguished visitor at the forgotten port of Puriton

<http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/uxella>

The Hidden Unity <http://www.spacevoice.fsnet.co.uk/semg/hdmenu.htm>

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THE HIDDEN UNITY and BEGINNINGS

The Hidden Unity looks at the strange phenomenon of subconscious siting of ley points, and notes that places of worship, of all religions and all ages, tend to predominate on leys. The environmental and philosophical implications of this are discussed, and the apparent necessity of worship but irrelevance of doctrine. Two ley centres are given as examples, and investigated in depth - the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Scunthorpe. There is an appendix by Eileen Grimshaw on the significance of the Pagan religion to this study. Illustrated with photographs, maps and line drawings. **£2 plus 30p p&p from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.**

Beginnings is about a series of potentially useful discoveries, mainly made by Jimmy Goddard over a period of about twenty years, but having some overlap with discoveries made by others. For various reasons, the investigations are all in their early stages, and some have not been continued. They include earth energy detection, natural antigravity, subconscious siting, ley width, and the solar transition effect. There is also a chapter on cognitive dissonance - a psychological factor which seems to have been at the root of all bigotry - scientific, religious and other - down the ages. The booklet is concluded with an account of the discovery of leys by Alfred Watkins. **£2 plus 30p p&p from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.**

EARTH PEOPLE, SPACE PEOPLE

In 1961, Tony Wedd produced a manuscript *Earth Men, Space Men*, detailing many claims of extraterrestrial contact. It was never published, and I had thought it was lost, though it has recently been located - Tony had given it to Timothy Good. To try to make up for the loss in a much more modest size, this booklet was prepared. As well as giving details of some of the more prominent contact claims, there are articles on the history of the STAR Fellowship and some of its personalities, evidence for life in the Solar System and investigation into extraterrestrial language.

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THE LEGACY OF TONY WEDD

This CD-ROM is an electronic form of the travelling exhibition Tony planned, using his voice, writing, photographs and drawings to illustrate his research and findings in the fields of flying saucers, landscape energies and lost technology.

£12 from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.

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